

Afghan National Army

Legal Development Training

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The overall purpose of the Afghan National Army (ANA) Legal Development Training Team (LDTT) project was to develop capacity within the ANA to provide consistent, self-sustained, and accurate legal instruction. The long-term intent of the project was to have the Afghans use the baseline course to develop future instruction for Afghan legal officers, field commanders and soldiers. The target audience of the ANA LDTT training was primarily Afghan legal officers (Afghan lawyers and non-lawyers). Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) oversees a Rule of Law project within the Afghan National Army/Ministry of Defense (ANA/MOD) to develop a comprehensive legal officer training plan. The plan envisions covering many subjects of Afghan law. The execution plan consists of breaking the project into critical tasks. Outside consultants, both military and civilian, staffed the project and CSTC-A provided financial support to the project.

All of the command project members had at least ten years of individual military experience. Command team members consisted of judge advocates from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marines, and Canadian Forces (Navy). In addition to legally trained personnel, Canadian Forces (Air Force) also provided a “training development officer” to round out the team. The sponsoring command temporarily assigned a junior reserve Army judge advocate to act as the project liaison.

The development of an ANA basic legal officer course (BLOC) was the first significant step towards execution of the comprehensive legal officer training plan. The BLOC consisted of general Afghan legal principles, international and operational law, basic military justice, and administrative law. North American legal development training team (LDTT) members outlined courses based on Afghan legal principles. The Afghans further developed the course material for use in training. The BLOC occurred in several phases.

Project Planning

CSTC-A initiated and planned the project. However, the project execution fell primarily to the Canadian Forces Military Law Center, the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, and an individual augmentee from the Center for Law and Military Operations (CLAMO).

Site Visit

The purpose of the site visit was to introduce the comprehensive legal officer training plan concept to legal officers from the ANA and the Ministry of Defense. During the visit, North American LDTT military lawyers also evaluated the knowledge, skills and abilities of their Afghan partners.

All LDTT members identified and agreed upon the subjects forming the BLOC. The BLOC list of subjects comported with the basic skill set required of an ANA legal officer to become minimally competent to perform his duties. Finally, during the site visit, LDTT organized team-building activities to build trust and unit cohesion.

Course Material Development

The intent of the project planners was for LDTT team members to develop course material through independent effort from a distance. Project planners wanted team members to communicate and share ideas using Share Point computer software. LDTT members first gathered in Kingston, Ontario in August 2008 to plan the division of labor. A second site visit to Kabul occurred in October 2008. The primary purpose of this visit was to evaluate the course curriculum development. A third site visit to Kabul occurred in December 2008 to resolve issues related to the BLOC.

The length of the BLOC course is four weeks with no less than four hours of instruction per day. Development of the course material was primarily the responsibility of the Afghans. North American members of the LDTT helped spur the development of the lessons and provided mentoring and instruction to “Train the Trainer.”

Course Preparation and Implementation

In January 2009, Canadian forces arrived in Kabul to prepare the Afghan LDTT to deliver the ANA BLOC. The CLAMO representative arrived in February 2009. In March 2009, more than 60 ANA and Ministry of Defense legal officers attended the first ANA BLOC in Kabul. Eight Afghan instructors delivered over 225 hours of instruction. In total, the course took 30 calendar days to complete. The ANA Air Corps training center in Kabul hosted the training. The Afghan LDTT organized and coordinated significant events to include: opening and closing sessions, guest speakers, public affairs coverage, class schedule, lodging, meals, transportation, a final exam, graduation certificates, assembly of course books, and classroom facilities.

Post Basic Legal Officer Course

CSTC-A arranged for the Afghan LDDT to visit the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School.



The first class of the Afghan National Army Basic Legal Officer course was a significant step in the overall legal officer training plan.

The LDTT conducted analysis of each of the functional areas for which the ANA legal officers performed in the course of their duties. As a result, the LDTT identified the job requirements ANA legal officers and defined the requisite duties, tasks, skills and knowledge. They selected the BLOC lessons from general legal subjects, military justice principles and concepts, duties and functions of the ANA Command Investigation Division, and duties and functions of a staff judge advocate.

While in Charlottesville, Va., the Afghans attended actual classroom sessions and seminars, and received a lesson in teaching methods. Additionally, the CLAMO individual augmentee and the Afghan team conducted a post-course analysis of the ANA basic legal officer course. Afghan LDTT members traveled to Charlottesville to conduct a post-course analysis, reinforce learning and teaching material and to develop an action list for the next BLOC.

The Afghan National Army, CSTC-A and its coalition partners plan to use the BLOC as the training cornerstone for the ANA legal corps. The plan is for all ANA and MOD legal officers to attend the BLOC. A ANA Legal Training Directorate (LTD) may be stood up in 2010. The LTD hopes to affiliate itself with a U.S. or foreign military legal center for continued mentoring. The long-term goal is to create an ANA Military Law Center and School from the ANA LTD. 🇺🇸



The graduating class of the first Afghan National Army Basic Legal Officer class consisted of more than 60 Afghan National Army and Ministry of Defense legal officers.